

**Washington, DC** - Congressman Mark Kirk announced today that the 2007 federal budget includes \$74 million to help fight suburban drug gangs. The \$74 million is part of \$395 million in new funding allocated for the Project Safe Neighborhoods Program. Kirk is working to secure funds from Project Safe Neighborhoods to help suburban police departments in Waukegan and North Chicago fight gang activities.

"There are over 3,000 gang members operating north of Lake-Cook Road," said Congressman Kirk commenting on the \$59 million allocated to support local prosecutors to bring gang members to justice and \$15 million to help curb gang violence. "This funding is essential to help our suburban law enforcement officials combat the increasing gang presence in our neighborhoods."

The federal budget also includes full-funding for Metra, including over \$16 million that will finish expansion work on the North-Central rail line. In January, Metra doubled the number of trains running on the North-Central Line from 10 to 20 giving Chicago commuters more flexibility. Congressman Kirk is currently working with Metra and Canadian Railroad to add express trains on the line during morning and evening rush hours.

"The expanded North-Central Line service has made commuting on this line more convenient for our northwestern suburbs," Kirk said. "Through negotiations with Canadian Railroad, I am hopeful we can add even more trains to provide greater flexibility to commuters. The North-Central Line will also offer service to O'Hare International Airport and help our communities meet their obligations under the Clean Air Act."

The 2007 federal budget also includes \$50 million for the Great Lakes Legacy Act to clean up polluted harbors (including Waukegan) and over \$23 million to continue the modernization of the Great Lakes Naval Training Center.

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